

# **Appendix A**

## **Watchable Wildlife Projects with Expanded Project Details**

### **(Successful project prioritization)**

#### **Level I Funding**

(Reflects current funding situation with no additional monies. Projects A and B are the highest priorities for WC Division Watchable Wildlife funding. Other Level I projects are not listed in priority or sequential order.)

#### **A) Maintain existing Watchable Wildlife Programs (including McNeil River, Round Island, Pack Creek, and Creamer's Field)**

**Problem Statement** - Although McNeil River, Round Island, Pack Creek, and Creamer's Field are often touted as DWC's 'Crown Jewels,' the budget is vulnerable to the changing priorities of the Legislature. This chronic insecurity in funding undermines the integrity of the programs. Long- and short-term planning is difficult. Ultimately, staff morale is affected, detracting from operation of high quality programs.

**Possible Solution** - Establish a secure funding source that will maintain these programs at current functional levels without using Fish and Game funds or licensing revenues.

##### **Considerations –**

- Programs work well now, thus there is a perception of no problem
- Use of PR Funds (possible political implications)
- Competition with established programs

**Cost** - Existing level

**Staffing** - Existing level

**Evaluation** - Programs funded with secure/consistent funds

#### **B) Create and fund a Statewide Watchable Wildlife Coordinator position**

**Problem Statement** – In spite of an acknowledged responsibility to manage watchable wildlife and to provide leadership to other agencies, NGO's, commercial

operators and individuals who are providing watchable wildlife programs and services in Alaska, our division has no dedicated position overseeing a watchable wildlife program. We currently have approximately 220 staff within the Division and an annual budget of over \$18 million, yet our expenditures on watchable wildlife are restricted to seasonal staff on a few special areas, and oversight of those select programs by staff with other duties. The public demand for and use of watchable wildlife is increasing dramatically, as is the need for a statewide coordinator.

**Possible Solution** – Create a statewide watchable wildlife coordinator (WB IV level – Range 20 PFT) with an annual operating budget. The primary mission of this individual will be to establish a watchable wildlife program, initially based on the recommendations of this workgroup, and to work with regional and area staff to enhance our watchable wildlife program.

**Considerations** – This statewide watchable wildlife coordinator will need to work closely with the existing managers of McNeil, Round Island, Pack Creek and Creamer’s Field.

**Cost** – Approximately \$150.0 per year total

**Staffing** – One WB IV (Range 20 – PFT)

**Evaluation** – Within the full year, the individual should have initiated all of the Level I projects listed within this document and drafted a long-range plan for the program based, to a large extent, on recommendations in this document.

### **C) Produce high-quality publications (both print and electronic) on responsible wildlife viewing behavior, Anchorage area wildlife viewing opportunities, and Fairbanks area wildlife viewing opportunities**

**Problem Statement** - According to a 1996 USFWS survey, >216,000 Alaskans age 16 and older watch wildlife as a recreational activity. Suzanne Miller’s research found that 78% of Alaskan residents and 74% of visitors want to know more about “how to find and watch wildlife.” Yet few sources of information for viewers exist, resulting decreased satisfaction among the viewing public. Immediate need exists for viewing guides for our main population centers and for a statewide brochure on responsible viewing behavior. Publications such as these are a cost-effective way of communicating with a large number of people.

**Possible Solution** - Produce 3 high quality printed and electronic publications that respond to the needs of visitors and residents for accurate viewing information and tips.

1. A brochure on responsible wildlife viewing
2. A viewing guide for the Anchorage area that provides information about habitats as well as individual species

3. A viewing guide for the Fairbanks area that provides information about habitats as well as individual species

**Considerations** - Ideally these brochures would be produced in cooperation with other agencies, such as the Municipality of Anchorage, the Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and, the Alaska Natural History Association, to name just a few. Costs and distribution responsibilities should be shared.

**Cost** – Approximately \$100.0

**Staffing** – Covered by Level 1, B

**Evaluation** – Popularity of the brochures (public feedback; web hits)

**D) Consider recommendations from public planning efforts that pertain to watchable wildlife (e.g., the Kenai and Kodiak Brown Bear plans and the Anchorage “Living with Wildlife” plan)**

**Problem Statement** – The Division of Wildlife Conservation has made a concerted effort to solicit public opinion and empower stakeholders in decision-making processes in recent years. As a result of these efforts, we have made a series of commitments to the public to follow through on their recommendations to the best of our ability. Specific wildlife viewing recommendations were developed within the Kenai and Kodiak Brown Bear Plans, and the Anchorage Living with Wildlife plan. If we are to retain our credibility, we have an obligation to honor our commitments.

**Possible Solution** – The Watchable Wildlife Coordinator, as well as the Regional Planner and Area Biologists, will review each planning document and determine what commitments the division has made. These items will then be categorized into projects that can be accomplished with existing staff and funding, and those requiring additional resources. Additional resources will be sought through the normal budgeting process, and will be included as requests for base or incremental appropriations under the Watchable Wildlife or area office budget.

**Considerations** – How to prioritize commitments of various plans. How to inform and involve the stakeholders in prioritization and implementation.

**Cost** - Varies

**Staffing** – Will be the responsibility of Statewide Coordinator [See Level 1, B:]. Coordinator will propose and oversee funding for projects in conjunction with the Area Biologist.

**Evaluation** – Commitments are met; success in implementation

**E) Explore and pursue funding and partnering opportunities with other agencies, NGO's, and corporations to coordinate and enhance watchable wildlife programs**

**Problem Statement** – The current lack of funds to accomplish wildlife-viewing projects and products makes it difficult to expand our efforts to a wider audience. We must be efficient, avoid redundancy, and coordinate with and recognize roles of other agencies. Traditionally, the much of the public has not considered ADF&G as an agency involved with wildlife viewing programs.

**Possible Solution** – We should explore partnerships and investigate alternative sources of funding. This can be accomplished by coordinating an interagency meeting to explore current roles and activities and coordinate future endeavors. We should also take the lead in re-invigorate the interagency “Watchable Wildlife Steering Committee”, and should continue to be the lead agency in coordinating the activities of the Interagency Bear Safety Group.

**Considerations** – Getting bogged-down with bureaucratic procedures our all of the agencies involved.

**Cost** – Minimal \$5.0 [travel/meetings?]

**Staffing** – See 1 B; Area Biologists, local staff

**Evaluation** – Review Interagency/NGO/Corporate sponsor project accomplishments

**F) Inventory current wildlife viewing programs within the state, including those administered by other agencies and private entities.**

**Problem Statement** – There is currently a lack of information about existing wildlife-viewing projects throughout the state, yet it seems the level of unmanaged, unregulated wildlife viewing is increasing. Without adequate information, we cannot evaluate the level of activity and the impact of that activity on wildlife populations and habitats. Consequently, meaningful management actions are difficult.

**Possible Solution** – We should gather information on current wildlife viewing activities by interviewing/surveying operators, agency staff and local residents. The purpose of these interviews/surveys would be to tally the numbers of operators and clients, primary areas of use, and to approximate the amount spent by clients. This initial evaluation could be accomplished by a graduate student, a contractor, or by seasonal staff. It would also be beneficial to seek partnerships with other agencies to evaluate the current situation. Information derived from this project will be crucial to making future management decisions and in setting priorities for future projects.

**Considerations** – Could be huge project to do a good job, and may require more expertise than a graduate student could provide.

**Cost** – Overhead and costs for a graduate student or contract

**Staffing** – Graduate student, contractor, or seasonal technician

**Evaluation** – Finished product and its quality

## **Level II Funding**

(Reflects the anticipated funding situation with “CARA Lite” – approximately \$2 million additional. This listing assumes continued funding for Level I projects. Projects A, B and C are the highest priorities for WC Division Watchable Wildlife funding. Other Level II projects are not listed in priority or sequential order.)

### **A) Create and fund Regional Watchable Wildlife positions.**

**Problem Statement** – As the DWC becomes more involved in watchable wildlife programs, the need for dedicated watchable wildlife staff will become more pressing. Current staff simply do not have the time or, in many cases, the expertise to implement programs that are quite different from traditional management activities. In order for the DWC to respond to regional requirements and needs, planning group commitments, and areas needing more immediate attention (e.g., Chilkoot River), it will be necessary to have staff with time, budget and expertise to resolve watchable wildlife issues and implement watchable wildlife projects.

**Possible Solution** – Create 4 regional Watchable Wildlife Specialists with their own budgets to assist local staff with implementing projects, identifying problem areas, and satisfying commitments to planning groups.

#### **Considerations** –

- Office space
- Organizational Structure
- Coordination with existing programs
- Communication between programs is critical

**Cost** - 4 WB IIIs plus about \$50,000 each in operating budgets.

**Staffing** – 4 WB IIIs

**Evaluation** – Are wildlife-viewing projects, cooperative efforts, planning commitments, etc. being implemented?

**B) Conduct a “needs assessment” of the public’s desires for future watchable wildlife programs.**

**Problem Statement** – While the astronomical growth in wildlife viewing businesses demonstrates strong public interest in viewing, the department has limited information about what specific programs the public wants. In order to ensure that division efforts correspond with public desires, a needs assessment should be performed. In addition to providing direction for the department, a needs assessment would help generate new project ideas and build a stronger relationship between the viewing public and the division.

**Possible Solution** – Use a variety of techniques to help ascertain public desires relative to watchable wildlife programs, including a professional, statistically valid survey, focus groups, and meetings with interested parties. Consider partnering with other entities interested in this information (e.g., the Division of Tourism and the Alaska Tourism Industry Association.)

**Considerations** – Human dimensions research can be politically sensitive. An independent contractor might best carry it out.

**Cost** – Unknown. It depends on the extensiveness of the assessment and whether the work is contracted out or performed by in-house planning staff.

**Staffing** – See above.

**Evaluation** – Finished product and its quality

**C) Enhance existing watchable wildlife programs (McNeil River, Round Island, Pack Creek and Creamer’s Field)**

**Problem Statement** – These programs are the most widely known watchable wildlife opportunities in the state and serve important resource management functions. Their effectiveness in serving those functions is a direct reflection on our agency. All programs are currently at minimal levels. Most sites need capital improvements and increased staff. Long-term staff is essential because of the continuity and quality it brings to these programs. Staffs at McNeil and Round Island are in supervisory roles in remote areas and are responsible for overall management, on-site management of visitor programs, resource protection, and law enforcement. In addition, most staff work non-traditional hours (and over-time) and are often not adequately compensated.

**Possible Solution** – Change intern positions and non-perm positions to permanent-seasonal positions. Elevate key positions to reflect their responsibilities and duties. Reinstate the technician position at Round Island that was eliminated in 1993. Repair and/or replace existing structures. Work with project supervisors to evaluate other important needs. Increase in-kind support.

**Considerations** – No obvious negative considerations. However, lack of attention to this issue will result in minimal or inadequate facilities and staffing for these sites that will probably not meet future needs and may cause these programs to degrade.

**Cost** – Increased costs of paying benefits. Capital improvements.

**Staffing** – Make the following changes to current staffing: (1) elevate the Round Island position to a WBI, (2) add 1 tech III at Round Island, (3) McNeil tech V reclassified to WBI.

**Evaluation** – Continuity and quality of programs and employee morale.

**D) Develop and implement a training program for wildlife viewing operators in coordination with the Watchable Wildlife Steering Committee.**

**Problem Statement** - Inconsistent and sometimes erroneous messages regarding wildlife viewing and wildlife are given by tour guides throughout the state.

**Possible Solution** – Provide voluntary pre-season training to tour guides, bus drivers, and shipboard naturalists. Make the training available on a GEOGRAPHIC AREA-specific basis. Participants would be awarded something like an “ADF&G tour guide of excellence” certificate when they complete the training and agree to abide by responsible wildlife viewing guidelines.

**Considerations** –

- Tour operators “buying in” to the training
- Quality and consistency of training program
- Quality and consistency of message given to tourists by program graduates
- Program development

**Cost** – Start-up costs mostly, fee could provide at least ADF&G’s matching funds for CARA.

**Staffing** – Regional coordinator and assistance from Area Biologists and other staff

**Evaluation –**

Number of tour guides trained

Quality of message

Does the program become more popular with tour operators?

**E) Develop and implement research programs that investigate the immediate and long-term effects of viewing operations on wildlife.**

**Problem Statement** - Wildlife viewing can be intrusive and may adversely affect wildlife behavior and habitats. Both acute and chronic effects are generally unquantified. For example, in the Juneau area, the Tongass National Forest is considering doubling the number of helicopter landings (mostly tour related) from about 20,000 to 40,000 per summer. Many of these landings occur in mountain goat habitat and near important kidding areas. Statewide there has been a tremendous increase in wildlife viewing operations throughout the state. More traffic increases the potential for negative impacts on wildlife and conflicts with other wildlife users.

**Possible Solution** – Conduct research to determine the extent and seriousness of expanding watchable wildlife activities and investigate possible solutions or mitigating measures. Quantify and analyze problem areas and consider solutions. Work with agencies, operators, NGOs, universities to identify concerns, develop study plans, and implement research.

**Considerations** – Resistance by operators in participating and complying. Behavior data is difficult to quantify. It may take many years to collect meaningful data. By the time data are collected, wildlife and/or other users can be severely affected.

**Cost** – variable, depending on partnerships.

**Staffing** – Existing research staff, watchable wildlife coordinator and specialists, and graduate students.

**Evaluation** – Publish peer-reviewed research findings. Improved understanding of effects/conflicts of wildlife viewing.

**F) Implement recommendations from public planning efforts that pertain to watchable wildlife (e.g. the Kenai and Kodiak Brown Bear plans and the Anchorage “Living with Wildlife” plan)**

**Problem Statement** – As noted in project at Level I D, the ADF&G, Division of Wildlife Conservation has made a concerted effort to solicit public opinion and empower stakeholders in decision-making processes in recent years. A result of those efforts is a series of commitments we have made to the public to follow through on their recommendations to the best of our ability. Specific wildlife viewing recommendations



have been developed within the Kenai and Kodiak Brown Bear Plans, and the Anchorage Living with Wildlife plan. If we are to retain our credibility, we have an obligation to honor our commitments. This is especially the case as we obtain supplemental funding through CARA lite monies.

**Possible Solution** – The Watchable Wildlife Coordinator, as well as the Regional Planner and Area Biologists, will review each planning document and determine what commitments the Division has made. These items will then be categorized into projects that can be accomplished with existing staff and funding, and those which will require additional resources. Additional resources will be sought to implement all possible items and will be administered under the Watchable Wildlife or Area office budget.

**Considerations** – How to prioritize commitments of various plans. How to inform and involve the stakeholders in prioritization and implementation.

**Cost** - Varies

**Staffing** – Will vary with each plan and will be determined and administered by a cooperative effort between the Regional Watchable Wildlife coordinators and the appropriate Area Biologist.

**Evaluation** – Commitments are met; success in implementation.

#### **G) Initiate new small-scale watchable wildlife programs in problem areas and locations that are identified by needs assessments**

**Problem Statement** - Areas with potential where small investment could enhance public benefits and minimize adverse effects on wildlife and hunters need to be identified and developed. Areas where current wildlife viewing is occurring in an unmanaged manner may be adversely affecting wildlife populations. These are inconsistent with preferred wildlife viewing practices and give ambiguous messages to the public. Conflicts between user groups need to be identified and addressed. For example, the Chilkoot River corridor is 1.4 miles long with >20,000 bear watchers, anglers, and other visitors annually, yet it has little regulation or organization. There is currently no on-site management to ensure that the public is following appropriate guidelines.

**Possible Solution** - Identify areas and implement projects where a small investment can make a big difference. There are undoubtedly a wide range of solutions to specific problems and opportunities (e.g. monitor at Chilkoot, bench at Kachemak Bay CHA), and we should solicit information on these areas from area biologists, regional staff, and the public.

**Considerations –**

- Can use grant program
- Public involvement/concerns drives decision-making

**Cost -** Variable

**Staffing –** Regional Coordinator, AB's and others

**Evaluation –** Decreased conflict; enhanced public benefit; greater resource protections; responsible wildlife viewing behavior

**H) Produce road and trail signs that describe wildlife habitats and species.**

**Problem Statement –** There is a serious shortage of road and trail signs to inform the public about wildlife, their habitats, and responsible wildlife viewing behavior. Visitors and residents need more ready and attractive information displays in key areas along roads and trails to take advantage of watchable wildlife opportunities and to learn how to be responsible watchable wildlife users.

**Possible Solution –** Place signs in key locations for wildlife concentrations, critical or typical habitat, and popular pullouts. Work with DOT to identify existing pullouts where signs would be appropriate. Work with other agencies and landowners to expand opportunities.

**Considerations –** Signs could draw attention to sensitive sites. More signs in some areas could increase use at existing sites to the point that facilities cannot accommodate use. Vandalism and sign maintenance is a constant expense.

**Cost –** Variable but could be kept lower through partnerships.

**Staffing –** Regional wildlife viewing Specialists and Area Biologists

**Evaluation –** General feedback from the public and affected agencies and land owners.

**I) Provide adequate physical space and displays to assist the wildlife viewing public at area offices and other visitor centers.**

**Problem Statement –** Some offices (e.g., Palmer) don't have adequate space to provide information and materials to the wildlife viewing public. With new programs, there will be increased traffic in area offices and visitor centers. If DWC is to be the leader in wildlife viewing, we need good facilities to accommodate and serve various public interests.

**Possible Solution** – Improve facilities in our area offices as necessary. Where possible, work with other agencies to pursue capital improvements. Coordinate with other agencies to assure that ADF&G materials are provided in their facilities and information from other agencies is offered at our facilities, as appropriate. Whenever possible, joint agency use of existing visitor centers will be encouraged.

**Considerations** –

- Ownership of buildings (explore new lease agreements when necessary)
- Physical limitations (floor plan) of the existing structures
- Potential loss of agency identity (public may be confused if there is a great deal of overlap in agency materials in a single site)

**Cost** – variable

**Staffing** – Contracting coordination by regional watchable wildlife Specialists, area biologists, regional staff.

**Evaluation** – Does the public come and do they get information?

**J) Provide enhanced printed, TV, radio, and web information to the public on wildlife viewing opportunities.**

**Problem Statement** – Public interest in wildlife viewing has grown dramatically in recent years. More than 70% of visitors and residents say they want more information on how to find and watch wildlife. Yet the information we provide to the public is extremely limited.

**Possible Solution** – Develop a variety of publications and media products, including wildlife viewing guides for major Alaska highways and state ferry routes; a calendar that highlights seasonal viewing opportunities; and weekly/biweekly tips regarding viewing “hot spots” for broadcast on radio and television. Ensure that all materials are available on the web. Produce public service announcements on viewing etiquette and ethics.

**Considerations** – Wherever possible, partner with other resource agencies.

**Cost** - \$200,000

**Staffing** – Regional and Statewide coordinators,

**Evaluation** – Popularity of the brochures (public feedback; web hits)

**K) Provide technical assistance and funding (e.g. grants and/or contracts) to communities and non-profit groups to identify and implement locally important watchable wildlife programs.**

**Problem Statement** – Individual communities are often the most knowledgeable about and sensitive to local wildlife viewing needs and opportunities. DWC currently has no way to take advantage of that expertise. Many communities look at wildlife viewing as an economic development tool while others may see it as a threat to wildlife resources and their lifestyle. The June scoping session indicated that small communities are interested in become more active in the wildlife-viewing arena. Cooperating on the local level is critical to project success and empowers local communities.

**Possible Solution** – Use 5-10% of CARA monies for grants or contracts to local communities or NGOs to enhance wildlife viewing opportunities. Work closely with these communities to help them develop projects.

**Considerations** –

- Differing opinions of local factions
- Grant/contract administration concerns
- Effective and fair distribution of funds

**Cost** – 5-10% of CARA monies for Watchable Wildlife.

**Staffing** – Regional and Statewide Watchable Wildlife staff.

**Evaluation** – completed projects and continued cooperation.

### **Level III Funding**

(Reflects the anticipated funding situation with “CARA Grande” – approximately \$15 million additional. This listing assumes continued funding for Level I and Level II projects, including enhancements where appropriate. Level III projects are not listed in priority or sequential order.)

#### **A) Create and fund Watchable Wildlife positions in selected area offices**

**Problem Statement** – Area staff are overloaded and don’t have the resources to accomplish additional tasks. Watchable Wildlife programs differ from traditional job duties and currently have low priority in most area offices.

**Possible Solution** – Add staff as needed in selected area offices. The DMT including the watchable wildlife coordinator will determine placement priorities. Watchable Wildlife staff could also perform educational and non-game duties in some offices.

**Considerations** – Office space and shared responsibilities with area staff and the need for additional support staff

**Cost** – Dependent upon how many positions needed, their levels, and where they are stationed

**Staffing** – entry level WB positions

**Evaluation** – adequate staffing

**B) Coordinate with the Alaska Department of Transportation to identify, plan, establish, and maintain roadside pullouts in areas that provide wildlife or important habitat viewing opportunities.**

**Problem Statement** – There is a serious shortage of road and trail signs to inform the public about wildlife, their habitats, and responsible wildlife viewing behavior. Visitors and residents need more ready and attractive information displays in key areas along roads and trails to take advantage of watchable wildlife opportunities and to learn how to be responsible watchable wildlife users. Many potential opportunities are missed because of the absence of roadside pullouts, creating dangerous situations in popular wildlife viewing areas (e.g. sheep watching along Turnagain Arm). DOT has responsibility for designing and constructing pullouts and we need to coordinate with them.

**Possible Solution** – Coordinate with DOT to identify and set aside areas that should be expanded for parking and wildlife viewing. Seek areas to add signs and other interpretive materials.

**Considerations** – Signs could draw attention to sensitive sites. More signs in some areas could increase use at existing sites to the point that facilities cannot accommodate use. Vandalism and sign maintenance is a constant expense.

**Cost** - variable

**Staffing** – existing area biologists and newly hired watchable wildlife staff

**Evaluation** – construction of new facilities

**C) Consider new large-scale watchable wildlife programs that are identified by needs assessment**

**Problem Statement** – Many existing sites are at capacity and the tourist industry in particular has expressed the need to develop viewing sites appropriate for large groups. Therefore, we should work with the tourism industry and other interest groups to ensure responsible development of new sites.

**Possible Solution** – Work with the industry, appropriate landowners and other interest groups to identify and responsibly develop high-quality sites that can provide wildlife viewing opportunities consistent with the goals identified by this workgroup.

**Considerations** – Potential conflicts with other users

**Cost** – Unknown

**Staffing** – Existing staff and newly hired Watchable Wildlife staff

**Evaluation** – Feedback from tourist groups, minimal adverse effects on wildlife and habitats, and minimized conflicts with other users.

**D) Develop an interactive watchable wildlife database and make it available to the public on the web and at kiosks in major airports and visitor centers**

**Problem Statement** – Tourists and locals often don't know where to go for watchable wildlife opportunities. People who travel to or seek information about Alaska often don't have access to accurate and unbiased information. Staff currently spends much of its time disseminating general information to the public

**Possible Solution** – Develop interactive, user-friendly, attractive, and centralized web-based kiosks or information centers. Work cooperatively with other agencies to share in compiling information about locations of wildlife viewing areas, species and habitats. Assign a web-master to complete this task (6-24 months). This process could be combined with projects to provide information to the public about licensing, and opportunities for hunting and fishing.

**Considerations** –

- Need position to design and implement the website.
- Continuing site maintenance and updates.
- Sensitive to local concerns, user conflicts, and concerns about resource conservation.

**Cost** – Webmaster, infrastructure, hardware, and software development and maintenance.

**Staffing** – Webmaster, existing staff, and newly hired watchable wildlife staff.

**Evaluation** –

Level of use and customer satisfaction

Decrease in number of general calls from the public to Area Biologists

**E) Evaluate regulations that pertain to wildlife viewing and propose new regulations if necessary to protect the resources.**

**Problem Statement** – There are currently poorly defined regulations pertaining to wildlife viewing activities and enforcement is difficult. (E.g. definition of “take” is defined in 5 AAC to include harassment but it is difficult to prosecute harassment cases).

**Possible Solution** – Work with Department of Law, the Division of Fish and Wildlife Protection, local Fish and Game Advisory Committees and the Board of Game to clarify and if necessary propose regulations to protect wildlife and habitat.

**Considerations** –

Public resistance to new regulations

Enforcement difficulty (manpower and legal clarity)

Non-traditional management issue for BOG and advisory committees

Lack of management authority over land use, airspace and some species

**Cost** – staff time researching and developing recommendations

**Staffing** – Watchable wildlife coordinator and specialists, HQ staff (Phil Koehl).

**Evaluation** – Enforceable regulations to protect wildlife and habitat.

**F) Hire seasonal staff at appropriate refuges, critical habitat areas, and other special areas (e.g. Potter Marsh and Creamer’s field) to lead nature walks for the public.**

**Problem Statement** – Potter Marsh and Creamer’s Field are the 2 highest-volume wildlife-viewing areas administered by the Department. Infrastructure and interpretive signs are in place, but there is limited direct contact with the visitors by ADF&G staff. Volunteers often lead nature walks in the areas, but the duration and frequency of the presentations is dependent on the generosity of volunteers. This is an important public service that should be provided.

**Possible Solution** –Seasonal technicians or non-perm employees would allow the Department to increase the number of personal contacts. Program continuity and consistency would be the outcome.

**Considerations** – Volunteers possess a zeal that sometimes exceeds that of seasonal staff. We would have to be careful to avoid disenfranchising those dedicated individuals who could not be hired.

**Cost** – Personnel costs

**Staffing** – For example, 2 permanent seasonal (4 months) techs each at Potter Marsh and at Creamer's field.

**Evaluation** – Number of nature walks and other interpretive services needed and the quality of the information disseminated.

**G) Complete the Potter Marsh project as currently proposed by ADF&G/Bird TLC (nature center, expanded boardwalk and trails, and marsh enhancements)**

**Problem Statement** – The existing boardwalk is popular and receives a lot of use. However, there is demand for a quieter experience away from the highway. Development of a nature center and expansion of the boardwalk and trails would offer an educational, accessible wildlife viewing experience. In addition, there is the potential for this to become the most consistently visited site in Alaska, therefore it would allow for an educational program that could reach a very large portion of the wildlife viewing public.

**Possible Solution** – There is already a plan in place. Follow the recommended plan for Potter Marsh development.

**Considerations** –

- Re-invigorating the plan.
- Get all the cooperators back together,
- Seek more sponsorships.

**Cost** – \$4-6 Million.

**Staffing** – Watchable Wildlife Coordinator, Regional Specialist, Area Biologist, Area watchable wildlife staff. New facility staff.

**Evaluation** – Completion of Potter March facilities, use by the public

**H) Acquire lands and/or access to important wildlife viewing areas if current landowners are willing to sell or donate the lands or easements.**

**Problem Statement** – The nature of land ownership in Alaska has resulted in fragmented management in some areas. Juxtaposition of private and public, small and large tracts of land may affect wildlife use of lands and potential watchable wildlife opportunities on these lands. In some places, private landowners may not be aware that



they can conserve important wildlife habitat by conveying their land or providing an easement.

**Possible Solution** – Investigate land ownership using needs assessment (See II B and II K). Discuss current land status and needs with Trust for Public Lands, The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, etc. about easements, acquisitions, and working with them. Develop solutions that optimize benefits for landowners and wildlife viewing program.

**Considerations** –

- Public resistance to government land acquisitions
- ADF&G's limited role as land manager
- Special land status may be politically sensitive
- Some lands have been selected and not conveyed, so it is difficult to plan and inventory.

**Cost** –Depends on purchases and scope of land acquisitions

**Staffing** –Info from area wildlife viewing and other staff, synthesized by Regional Coordinator who pursues partnering etc. as suggested by area staff. Staff from other agencies would also play a role.

**Evaluation** –Decreased land fragmentation; increased habitat protection.

## **Appendix B**

### **Strengths, Weaknesses, and External Opportunities, and Threats (Internal DWC)**

The bracketed number after each item indicate the number of Chicago style votes it received from the joint Watchable Wildlife, Non-game, and Existing Management and Research workgroups.

#### **Internal Strengths**

- ADF&G has public-based regulations process [2]
- Regulation process
- Public input strategies (BOG, Ad. Comm., planning) [4]
- Process for improving (PEER, DMT, etc., Strategic Planning
- Efficiency gets lots done with little money [2]
- Distinguished history since statehood
- Historic perspective (corporate knowledge)
- Secure (albeit minimal) funding [1]
- Legislative responsibility [1]
- Wildlife management model
- Dedicated individuals
- Committee structure to decision-making process
- Diverse experience across employees
- Desire to expand scope of discussion
- Dedication [2]
- Staff – high quality – long time
- Staff expertise/team work [5]
- Independence
- Commitment
- Dedicated employees
- Professional expertise
- Expertise
- Education
- Experience [2]
- Local knowledge & historical perspective
- Wildlife management model
- Little middle management, not too bureaucratic
- Published in scientific peer-reviewed journals [1]
- Genuine concern for resources – feeling of stewardship
- Longevity of personnel leading to intimacy with issues

#### **Internal Weaknesses**

- Lack of leadership vision (politics of commissioner level & up) [3]
- ADF&G not a land manager in most of the state [1]

- Biologists usually good at working alone and not good cooperators
- Focus does not include public (not explaining what we are doing)
- Ideological balance of organization is not indicative of general population
- Lack of diversity
- Currently not sure of public process
- Limited viewpoint/perspective of staff too hunter/trapper oriented
- Not enough emphasis on non-game outreach – too focused on traditional game management
- Resistance to change
- Lack of new blood/ideas
- Agency “inertia”
- Split between game & non-game
- Factionalism [1]
- Tunnel vision
- Lack of attention to rural Alaska issues & rural Alaskans [2]
- Perceptions of mandates differ
- Jobs “in a box” with little interaction of ability, skills, knowledge
- Mission and funding sources do not match [6]
- Relatively limited funding for size of management areas (compared to national parks or refuges)
- Too few staff to do all the work [24]
- Resources – human/\$
- Budget
- Small staff
- Small budget
- Too much to do
- Inability to attract new staff
- Recruitment
- Salary structure [3]

## **External Opportunities**

- Partnerships with other organizations; NGO’s, and Native organizations; UA [11]
- Partnerships with other agencies [5]
- Expertise in sister organizations
- Increased public environmental savvy [7]
- Passionately interested users [4]
- CARA Funding [3]
- Federal Funds – CARA [2], NMFS [1], NSF
- Federal Agencies; Lots of resources
- \$\$
- People
- Equipment
- National / internal conservation plans – coordination [4]
- Alaska’s wildlife resources [3]
- Potential for “outside” funding: FS, BLW, FWS, etc.

- Genuine concern for resources; feeling of stewardship
- Relatively high degree of credibility with the public [1]
- Public's high regard for and interest in wildlife [1]
- Longevity of personnel
- Native organizations want a greater role in wildlife management @ policy level
  - Co-management
  - Project level: harvest assessments, surveys
- Broad-based focus groups to measure the pulse of the public
- Relatively Pristine Habitats
- Advisory Committee Education and input

## External Threats

- Legislative control and/or interference w/wildlife policy and budgets [7]
- Decreasing interest/ability of individuals for predator harvest in some rural areas [6]
- ORV / Public access to wildlife resources [6]
- Changing transportation modes, development of new types of transportation
- Recreation vehicle use
- Politics of subsistence [5]
- Politically driven wildlife management [3]
- Wildlife management by ballot [1]
- Public misunderstanding of subsistence issues
- Pollution/contaminants (regional/global) [2]
- Co-management State/Fed [2]
- Unresolved subsistence management [2]
- Dual management [2]
- Overfunding by feds raises expectations [2]
- Global warming and influence our wildlife and ecosystems [2]
- Loss of sea ice! [1]
- Non-secure funding for habitat enhancement (currently CIPs) [1]
- Cooperation with Feds – takes time and money to “cooperate” [1]
- Usurpation of expertise/management by federal agencies [1]
- Declining State revenue [1]
- Non-consumptive wildlife use, i.e. – bear watching [1]
- Increased human use of wildlife [1]
- Conflicting expectations of various public interest/user groups [1]
- Caught in the crossfire [politics of wildlife management]
- Increasing public demand: Subsistence vs. sport hunting
- Over emphasis on meat/harvest and competition (some limits are only perceptual)
- Loss of wildlife habitat
- National influence from Congress, public interest groups can be threats when they are uninformed, misguided, or disregard Alaskans
- The Legislature
- Resource development

- Pro-development Governor, Legislature, and industry influence threatens habitat and environmental integrity [1]
- Out-of-sync with our publics
- Unnecessary polarization of public interests deters good policymaking and neuters science/mgmt.
- Some of public doesn't trust us.
- Insensitive to the geographic, social, cultural diversity of our state
- Predator management – particularly Unit 13 & 19 [20]
- Native sovereignty over wildlife on Native lands (still a public trust resource?)
- Increasing costs and regulations
- Lack of mechanism to register wildlife watching guides

## Appendix C

### Project Prioritization Attempt #1

The Watchable Wildlife Workgroup first attempted to prioritize the project list by designating projects as maintenance and operations (M/O); enhancements (EN); new and capital improvements (CI); and new projects (NP.)

McNeil River M/O=Maintain and Operate budget category

EN staff; student intern

Round Island M/O

Pack Creek M/O

Creamer's Field MO

Fairbanks F&G Office Lobby M/O – model for others to strive for

Other area offices to a lesser degree EN=Enhancement

Mendenhall Wetlands M/O

Potter Marsh M/O

Bear Safety Workgroup M/O

Continue inter-agency process to ensure everybody gets the same message

Various brochures M/O

APLIC Partnerships M/O

1. NP Hire ASAP a Wildlife Viewing Specialist [Coordinator?] to inventory enhancing wildlife viewing opportunities; "Where are we?" "Where do we want to be?"

A staff resource to support division wildlife viewing efforts (and other staff)

2. Wildlife viewing publications:
  - a. Brochures/Guides
  - b. NP Highway viewing guides/cruise ships
  - c. EN How to
  - d. EN Where to
  - e. Education
  - f. Local in nature
  - g. EN Update existing publications; incorporate more ecosystem approach
  - h. Identify species habitats
  - i. EN Responsible viewing brochure update
  - j. NP Wildlife viewing guide for the State Ferries
  - k. Anchorage guides
  - l. Fairbanks guides
3. NP Chilkoot River
  - a. Wildlife viewing area
  - b. New position to monitor use

4. NP Training Program for:

- a. Charter operations
  - b. People on trains
  - c. Guides
  - d. For Safety
- Accuracy in wildlife information
- 5. EN Enhance Potter Marsh
  - a. CI Expand nature center and boardwalk
  - b. Elevate water level
  - c. Handicapped access
- Partnership type of project
- 6. NP-CI Roadside pull-offs; viewing and education
  - a. Trailhead/side interpretation
- 7. M/O Round Island
  - a. EN Capital Improvements - New cabin needed
- 8. M/O Pack Creek
  - a. EN Enhance staffing
- 9. M/O Mendenhall
  - a. CI New signs
- Kiosk
- 10. Seward Peninsula Roadside Viewing booklet
- 11. NP Kenai bear specialist
- 12. NP-CI Kodiak bear viewing roadside pull-out
- 13. NP Kodiak Bear Technician
- 14. Creamer's Field
  - a. Enhance staffing
  - b. Create partnerships
- 15. McNeil River
  - a. Enhance staffing
  - b. Market website
- 16. EN Website
  - a. Market all wildlife viewing areas:
  - b. Links to web cams, other related sites
  - c. Research potential for remote viewing (web cams)
- 17. Wildlife viewing publications for:
  - a. PWS
  - b. Kachemak Bay
  - c. Resurrection Bay
- 18. Inventory and Identify potential wildlife viewing areas:
- 19. Improving Area Offices [in line with Fairbanks model]
  - a. CI Palmer Office for education, face to face contact with public: (e.g., Fairbanks office)
  - b. CI Address the wildlife viewing aspect of all offices
    - i. Staffing
    - ii. Displays
    - iii. Literature and information
- 20. NP Develop wildlife viewing calendar

21. NP Use TV/Radio spots
  - a. Current viewing operations
  - b. Phone hotline for wildlife viewing
  - c. Weekly newspaper columns
22. NP What does the public want?
  - a. Survey
  - b. Response cards
  - c. Outhouse logs
23. Sponsor Kachemak Bay bird festival
  - a. Purchase binoculars, scopes
24. NP Homer demo forest – interpretive signs along trails
- ~~25. Put up critical habitat sign~~
26. Interpretive signs
  - a. NP At Homer Airport
  - b. NP Calvin Coyle Trail interpretive signs
27. NP Pratt Museum bear display
28. EN Talks at schools – statewide
- ~~29. Identify needs for Round Island, Pack and McNeil~~
  - ~~a. Bring Round Island up to McNeil standards~~
- ~~30. Develop wildlife viewing areas near communities (so they will be accessible to all economic classes)~~
31. NP Increase Staff at state refuges
  - a. Lead natural history walks
32. Publications on common wildlife
33. NP Contingency project to take advantage of partnership
34. NP Alaska – How to Video and/or CD; where to see, what, when, etc.
35. NP Interactive wildlife viewing database for user access
36. NP Airport Kiosk
37. Wildlife Viewing legal review & assessment; regulations/guidelines
38. Regulations more specific for wildlife viewing
  - a. Legal review and assessment of regulations
47. Investigate potential impact of helicopter activity on mountain goats [20,000 landing approved by Forest Service in Juneau area; may double to 40K] (NP)
48. Study affects of unmanaged bear viewing (NP)
49. Acquisition of land that is excellent for viewing [e.g. Sheep Mountain-Cooper Landing] (CI)
50. Explore funding and other relationships with TNC, DU, and other NGOs. (NP)
51. Community competitive grant program or matching grants to communities for wildlife-viewing projects
52. Wolverine Creek (M/O)



## **Appendix D**

### **Project Prioritization Attempt #2**

#### **Program Categories**

##### **Site Development/Enhancement and Capital Improvements**

Flip chart item #1, 17, 21, 38, 41, 42, 43, 45, 46

#1-Hire ASAP a Wildlife Viewing Specialist [Statewide Coordinator & Regional]

#17 -Enhance Potter Marsh (Expand nature center and boardwalk, Elevate water level; Handicapped access) (EN)

#21 -Inventory and Identify potential wildlife viewing areas (NP)

#38 –Round Island (capital improvements) (EN)

#41 - Mendenhall (new signs; kiosk)

#42 – Area Office outreach activities (EN)

#43 – Roadside viewing pull-offs, signs (also bike, hiking, etc. trails) (CI)

#45 –Improve Palmer’s Main Office (CI)

#46 – Address the wildlife viewing aspect of all of offices (displays, staffing, literature/info; combine with periodic remodels) (CI)

##### **Information and Education**

Flip chart item #1, 2-14, 16, 20, 22, 23, 24, 26-32, 34-36, 41

#1 -Hire ASAP a Wildlife Viewing Specialist [Statewide Coordinator & Regional]

#2 –Highway viewing guides – cruise ships (NP)

#3 – Brochures/guides (regional/local) (NP)

#4 – Wildlife viewing guide for state ferry (NP)

#5 – How to identify individual species habitats

#6 – Where to

#7 - struck out

#8 - struck out

#9 – Update existing publications (EN)

#10 – Responsible viewing brochure update (EN)

#11 – Anchorage Area wildlife viewing guide (NP)

#12 – Fairbanks Area wildlife viewing guide (NP)

#13- Roadside wildlife viewing booklet for Seward Peninsula (NP)

#14 – Viewing guides for the heaviest use areas: PWS, Kachemak Bay, Resurrection Bay (NP)

#16 – Training program (fee charged) for: charter operators, people on trains, guides, for safety, accuracy in wildlife information (NP)

- #20 – Website enhancement (market all wildlife viewing areas, links to web cams, other related sites, research potential for remote viewing via web cams) (EN)
- #22 – Develop wildlife viewing calendar (NP)
- #23 – Use TV/Radio spots (current viewing opportunities, phone hotline, newspaper column) (NP)
- #24 – What does public want? (survey, response cards, outhouse logs) (NP)
- #26 – Sponsor Bird viewing festivals (e.g., Kachemak Bay Bird Festival) (NP)
- #27 – Homer Demonstration Forest (interpretive signs on trails) (NP)
- #28 – Interpretive signs at Homer Airport (NP)
- #29 – Calvin Coyle Trail interpretive signs (NP)
- #30 – Pratt Museum bear display (NP)
- #31 – Talks to schools – statewide (EN)
- #32 -Increase Staff at state refuges (Lead natural history walks) (NP)
- #34 – Alaska “How to” video – “CD” (where to see, what, when, etc.) (NP)
- #35 – Interactive wildlife viewing database for user access (NP)
- #36 - Airport Kiosks (NP)
- #41- Mendenhall (new signs; kiosk)

### **New Staff**

Flip chart item #1, 32, 37, 39, 42

- #1 -Hire ASAP a Wildlife Viewing Specialist [Statewide Coordinator & Regional]
- #32 -Increase Staff at state refuges (Lead natural history walks) (NP)
- #37 – McNeil River (enhance staffing; market website) (EN)
- #39 –Pack Creek (enhance staffing) (EN)
- #42 -Area Office outreach activities (EN)

### **Implementation of Existing Plan Recommendations**

Flip chart item #1, 15, 18, 19, 44

- #1 -Hire ASAP a Wildlife Viewing Specialist [Statewide Coordinator & Regional]
- #15 -Chilkoot River (Wildlife viewing area; New position to monitor use) (NP)
- #18 –Kenai Bear Specialist (NP)
- #19 – Kodiak Bear Viewing Technician (NP)
- #44 –Kodiak bear viewing pull-out (CI)

### **Interagency Coordination**

Flip chart item #1, 25, 33, 40

- #1 -Hire ASAP a Wildlife Viewing Specialist [Statewide Coordinator & Regional]
- #25 -Wildlife Viewing legal review & assessment; regulations/guidelines (NP)
- #33 -Contingency project to take advantage of partnership (NP)
- #40 –Creamer’s Field (Enhance partnerships) (EN)

## Appendix E

### Project Prioritization Attempt #3

Chicago voting for identifying Priority Projects/Actions 9:30 AM 7/18/01; Resulting ranking:

- Staff Resource Support
  - Address wildlife viewing aspects of all F&G offices
  - Explore funding and other relationships with TNC, DU, and other NGO's.
  - Study affects of unmanaged viewing
  - Responsible viewing brochure
  - Chilkoot River
  - Training Program
  - Update responsible viewing brochure
  - Website enhancement
  - Roadside viewing pull-offs, signs
  - Investigate potential impact of helicopters
  - Contingency project [Above line received >1 vote]
- 
- [Below line received 1 vote]
- 
- McNeil enhancements
  - Pack Creek enhancement
  - Creamer's enhancement
  - Potter Marsh enhancement
  - Kenai bear specialist
  - Kodiak bear viewing plan recommendations pull-out
  - Anchorage viewing plan recommendations Kodiak bear viewing technician
  - Roadside viewing Seward Peninsula Booklet
  - Viewing guide for heaviest use areas
  - Fairbanks Guide
  - Wildlife viewing legal review
  - Identify what the public wants
  - Interactive database
  - Work with communities to co-sponsor wildlife-viewing projects